

Article reviews

Don't have time to read all of those business publications that keep landing on your desk? Fear not, *Club Network* has done the work for you. Following is a summary of the key points of three must-read articles that have been published over the last few months.

'Handling the telephone enquiry'

By Andrew Freedman, *Club Success*, February 2006, pp12-13

To be read by: Club owners and managers

The challenge of converting incoming telephone enquiries into immediate revenue and future profit is one faced by all fitness facilities. Freedman discusses various points which aim to maximise the potential conversion rate for these 'golden opportunity' prospects.

The service desk may not know all the answers to questions which are for another department, but tips are given on how this first point of contact can act in a professional, efficient manner which gives the caller confidence in the quality of the facility.

Building a friendly rapport, while giving all of the required information is the important role of the membership staff, who should also organise a convenient schedule for the prospect for viewing, trialling, and hopefully joining the facility.

The article also outlines common problems which result in lost conversion opportunities, and methods for remedying them, focusing on creating a positive mindset among staff who represent your facility on the telephone. ♦

'People buy for their own reasons, not for the reasons your marketing department suggests'

By Tim Connor, *FitPro Business*, June/July 2006, p7

To be read by: Club managers and marketing staff

This sales oriented article examines what has and what hasn't changed in the business of selling in recent years.

The consumer now has better access to information on your product and that of your competitors, is better informed, is aided by technology when buying, and has higher standards than the buyer of yesteryear. The make-up of the market is delineated into three major sections; the retired, the baby boomers and the affluent under 35s. Women also exert more influence on spending, and cross cultural sales have increased vastly.

Connor maintains that certain factors remain the same however. Consumers, he says, want value, buy what they

want, will not buy simply because they like you, and want to buy from people they trust.

He asserts that people like to buy, but resist being sold to, an important thing to keep in mind when embarking on a sales relationship rather than a one-off sale. Consumers also buy for their own reasons, not those dictated by marketing departments. Reasons why people don't buy are also listed, with the issue of trust again being emphasised. The article advises how to remedy these reasons by listening to the needs of the prospect rather than through forcing them to listen to the sales spiel of the seller. ♦

'Happy members + happy trainers = profits'

By Scott McLain, *IDEA Fitness Manager*, March 2006, pp14-15

To be read by: Club managers and HR

Member integration is important for clubs' retention figures. This article discusses in-house education programs which benefit members and trainers.

The discomfort of many new members is apparent when they join a facility, and this, argues McLain, should be seen as an opportunity for trainers to reassure lost looking individuals while increasing their own business and the revenue of the club.

The article outlines the structure for a seminar series to introduce members, old and new, to various disciplines within fitness which can then be leveraged into ongoing

personal training sessions. A seminar on women's strength training, for example, could attract the interest of members who have previously restricted themselves to mainly cardio workouts. Through this, the seed is sown and contact with the trainer made.

McLain advocates continuing education for trainers through an in-house 'farming' system, monthly presentations and Personal Development Accounts which fund courses, conference and workshop attendance and learning materials. In addition to qualifications, the article also emphasises the importance of passion, thirst for knowledge and team player credentials in staff members. ♦

Full articles available online at
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